Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

First Nations
National Child Benefit
Reinvestment

Progress Report for the year ending March 31, 2009

Canada

Canada is built on a promise of opportunity, the chance to work hard, raise a family and make a better life. Today, it is more important than ever to deliver on this promise, and ensure that all Canadians share in the promise of this land, regardless of cultural background, gender, age, disability or official language. This Government will break down barriers that prevent Canadians from reaching their potential.

Many working-age Canadians are faced with the dual pressure of holding down a job and caring for their family. Increasing numbers of Canadians are taking care of elderly parents while also raising young children. Our Government is committed to supporting working families and helping make ends meet.

Speech from the Throne, November 2008

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www.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca
1-800-567-9604
TTY only 1-866-553-0554

English (online)
QS-7021-090-BB-A1
Catalog: R1-21/2009E-PDF
ISSN: 1929-4034

Français (en ligne)
QS-7021-090-BB-A1
Catalog: R1-21/2009F-PDF
ISSN: 1929-4042

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This Publication is also available in French (pdf) under the title: Réinvestissement de la Prestation nationale pour les enfants des Premières Nations – Rapport d'étape pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2009.

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List of Acronyms

AB	Alberta
AHRDA	Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement
BC	British Columbia
CRA	Canada Revenue Agency
F/P/T	Federal/Provincial/Territorial
IA	Income Assistance
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
HRSDC	Human Resources and Social Development Canada
NCB	National Child Benefit
NCBS	National Child Benefit Supplement
CCTB	Canada Child Tax Benefit
MB	Manitoba
NCBR	National Child Benefit Reinvestment
ON	Ontario
PEI	Prince Edward Island
QC	Quebec
SK	Saskatchewan
YK	Yukon

Definitions

Income Assistance: a program of last recourse that provides financial supports to meet basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) and special needs, and employment-related support for individuals and families. Also commonly referred to as "social assistance" and "welfare".

Parent: the term "parent" as used throughout this report should be read as inclusive of anyone who has legal care/control of a child, and therefore includes legal guardians, non-custodial parent with access, etc.

1 | Executive Summary

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC's)[1] National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR) is the on-reserve counterpart to one component of the broader National Child Benefit (NCB) initiative, a child poverty initiative jointly established in 1998 by federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The lead federal department for the NCB is Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).[2] As per the federal/provincial/territorial NCB partnership, provinces and territories administer the NCBR off-reserve, while Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is responsible for the NCBR on-reserve in collaboration with HRSDC.

The NCB has three objectives:

- to help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty;
- to promote attachment to the workforce by ensuring that families will always be better off as a result of working; and,
- to reduce overlap and duplication by harmonizing program objectives and simplifying administration.

To achieve those objectives, the NCB consists of two key components:

- A financial benefits component, consisting of the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit and National Child Benefit Supplement, and in some provinces/territories a provincial/territorial "integrated" child benefit; and,
- A reinvestment component (the National Child Benefit Reinvestment), which funds community-based supports and services for children in low-income families.

Through the NCBR, First Nations are able to direct reinvestment funding to self-prioritized activities in line with the stated objectives of the NCB. Given the unique scope and flexibility of the NCBR, First Nations have been able to establish and operate a wide range of programs and services that otherwise would not exist in many communities.

In 2008-2009, INAC NCB investments and reinvestments for children amounted to just over $60 million; since the beginning of the initiative in 1998-1999, investments and reinvestments on-reserve have totalled more than $584 million. This report describes the goals, expenditures, and types of projects offered, and reflects the shared efforts of First Nations and the Government of Canada in providing supports to reduce the depth and effects of child poverty in First Nations.

1 | At the time of publishing of this report, the common name of this department has changed to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). However, during the fiscal year 2008-2009 covered by this report, it was known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

2 | At the time of publishing of this report, the name of this department has changed to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. However, during the fiscal year 2008-2009 covered by this report, it was known as Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

2 | Introduction: The National Child Benefit in First Nations

This report provides Canadians with information about the National Child Benefit (NCB) on-reserve, providing highlights on benefits of the NCB in First Nations, including First Nations' National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR) success stories as well as insight into innovations and challenges. This 2009 Progress Report represents the tenth edition since the inception of the NCB initiative in 1998.

This progress report:

- provides ***background*** information on the National Child Benefit initiative, including the National Child Benefit Reinvestment component;
- outlines the ***purposes and activities*** of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's First Nations National Child Benefit Reinvestment;
- describes and provides ***examples of the kinds of projects*** established by First Nations using reinvestment funding;
- presents quantitative ***data to illustrate the scale*** of NCBR projects on-reserve; and,
- highlights the ***specific achievements*** of First Nations under the initiative from its inception through to the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

The information upon which this tenth annual report was produced is taken from departmental records.

3 | National Child Benefit: Background

Reducing Child Poverty

In March 1996, the Ministerial Council Report on Social Reform and Renewal recognized the need for a National Child Benefit system for all Canadian children. This need was subsequently embraced as a priority during the August 1996 Annual Premiers' Conference. The National Child Benefit (NCB) was introduced in the 1997 federal budget in response to the Government of Canada's commitment to improving assistance to children in low-income families, and set into motion in 1998 as a joint initiative of federal, provincial and territorial governments with a First Nations component.

Prior to the introduction of the National Child Benefit in 1998, there was minimal collaboration in the design and delivery of federal child benefits through the tax system and provincial/territorial supports through social assistance programs. Although both systems were intended to help families escape poverty, the interactions between them (as well as with the labour market) inadvertently created barriers and disincentives for parents/guardians to move from welfare to work. Families in receipt of social assistance received numerous cash and "in kind" benefits on behalf of their children that were not available to low-income employed families. Further, because social assistance benefits are designed to increase with family size whereas employment wages are not (minimum wage is minimum wage, regardless of family size), parents/guardians who moved from welfare to work might see only a minimal increase, if any at all, in their family's income – in reality, exiting welfare often meant their family income would decrease. Further, leaving welfare for work often meant a loss of other valuable supports including health, dental and prescription drug benefits. When the cost of other job-related expenses such as child care, transportation, and clothing/equipment requirements were factored in, families could find themselves much worse off for taking a job than they had been while receiving social assistance. These barriers and disincentives are commonly referred to as the "welfare wall".

The intent of the National Child Benefit was to replace the children's portion of welfare benefits with an income-tested child benefit available to all low-income families, thus reducing the financial disincentives component of the welfare wall, while at the same time producing "savings" at the provincial/territorial/First Nation level that would be reinvested into supports for children in low-income families. Having children's benefits delivered outside of welfare, available to families regardless of the *source* of their income (e.g., social assistance, low-wage employment, Employment Insurance or other income support program), helps ensure that families moving from welfare to work will not face interruption or loss of benefits for their children. Further, reinvestment programs provide services that support children's health and social development, and help ensure that parents have the supports they need to access and stay in the workforce.

The objectives of the National Child Benefit are as follows:

- to help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty;
- to promote attachment to the work force by ensuring that families will always be better off as a result of working; and,
- to reduce overlap and duplication by simplifying the administration of benefits for children.

The basic principle of the NCB initiative is to ensure that low-income families, over the long term, are able to enter and participate successfully in the labour force. In the immediate term the NCB also aims to alleviate the effects of child poverty. The National Child Benefit is comprised of two components to ensure the principle and objectives of the initiative are met: (1) a monthly financial benefit (the *Canada Child Tax Benefit* and *National Child Benefit Supplement*, and applicable provincial/territorial integrated child benefits), and (2) the National Child Benefit Reinvestment.

Financial Benefits Component

Under the *Income Tax Act*, the Government of Canada has established the *Canada Child Tax Benefit* (CCTB), a base benefit aimed at low and middle income families, and the *National Child Benefit Supplement* (NCBS). Around 80% of Canadian families receive the CCTB while approximately 40% of families are eligible for some portion of the NCBS. Eligibility is established by an initial CCTB/NCBS application (upon the birth or addition of a child), and in subsequent years by a Canada Customs and Revenue Agency income test, calculated based on information contained in income tax returns. The benefit year runs from July to June each year (e.g., a family's 2007 income tax return will determine the benefits they receive from July 2008 to June 2009). Families whose total income is not greater than the applicable maximum level receive monthly payments in accordance with the number and ages of their children and their net income.

The CCTB and NCBS benefits for low income families are tax-free and adjusted to stay in line with increases in the cost of living. Since its beginning, the NCBS has been increased annually and, from January 2000 onward, both the NCBS and the CCTB have been fully indexed. Maximum allowable income levels have also been raised.

In addition to the federal financial supports, provincial or territorial child benefits are also available to low-income families in some jurisdictions. For most of these benefits, families do not need to submit a separate application; the Canada Revenue Agency obtains the required information from the NCBS application form and subsequent annual income tax returns, and benefits are paid as an "integrated child benefit" (i.e., federal and provincial/territorial child benefits together on one monthly cheque to families). In 2008-2009 supplementary provincial/territorial integrated child benefits were offered in a number of jurisdictions:

- Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit
- British Columbia Family Bonus
- New Brunswick Child Tax Benefit
- Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit
- Northwest Territories Child Benefit
- Nova Scotia Child Benefit
- Nunavut Child Benefit
- Ontario Child Benefit
- Yukon Child Benefit

A significant feature of the financial benefits component of the NCB is that benefits are payable to families who meet an income test, regardless of whether they are working or receiving social assistance. Thus, parents who find employment but have low earnings will still receive child benefit payments to help them maintain the independence they have gained as members of the workforce.

Reinvestment Component

As per the terms of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) National Child Benefit Governance and Accountability Framework, introduction of the National Child Benefit Supplement allowed provinces and territories to reduce their social assistance rate schedules by an amount up to or equal to the NCBS without negatively affecting the overall income of families in receipt of social assistance. This was part of the design of the National Child Benefit, so that while overall financial benefits to families would not decrease, the province/territory would realize social assistance "savings". As per the terms of the agreement, provinces/territories that chose to recover the NCBS through their social assistance systems are required to reinvest the "savings" into services and supports for children in low-income families – this is the essence of the National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR).

Most provinces/territories have opted to modify their social assistance schedules and use the freed-up funds for NCBR programming, except for New Brunswick (which has chosen not to recover the NCBS from families, therefore no funds are available for NCBR) and Manitoba (which initially recovered the NCBS, but ceased doing so in 2005). To determine on-reserve NCBR funding allocations, INAC mirrors the reinvestment (NCBS recovery) model used by the reference province/territory – therefore, the NCBR on-reserve component does not operate in the provinces of Nova Scotia and Manitoba. Appendix A to this report sets out in more detail the various approaches taken by provinces, territories, and First Nations in offsetting social assistance funds for NCBR projects/programming within their respective jurisdictions.

In recognition of the differences in the suite of available services and the unique needs of First Nations, there are some differences in how the NCBR operates off-reserve in provinces/territories in comparison to on-reserve. The on-reserve NCBR provides flexibility for First Nations to respond to the needs and preferences of their communities. Off-reserve in provinces/territories, the NCBR provides funds for projects and programming under the following six (6) activity areas:

1. ***Child/Day Care Initiatives*** – to create new or support existing child care spaces, so that low-income families are better able to access affordable child care while working or attending training.

2. ***Child Benefits and Earned Income Supplements*** – to provide low-income families with additional financial supports so that parents/guardians/youth may remain employed while working toward higher wages.

3. ***Early Childhood Services and Children-at-Risk Services*** – to help children get a healthy start in life by providing supports to low–income families when their children are young.

4. ***Supplementary Health Benefits*** – to provide health/dental benefits, so that families do not forfeit these types of supports when they move from welfare to low-income employment.

5. ***Youth Initiatives*** – for a range of benefits and services designed to assist and support youth, with particular attention to youth-at-risk.

6. ***Other NCB Programs, Benefits, and Services*** – other programs and services for children in low-income families, as determined by individual provinces and territories.

4 | The National Child Benefit in First Nations

Financial Benefits Component

Low-income families in First Nations communities receive the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) and National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) payments from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) under the same eligibility conditions that apply to families in other areas of the country. On-reserve families, like other Canadian families, are required to file an initial application and an annual income tax return to provide Canada Revenue Agency with the information needed to calculate their entitlement; the amount of the benefits provided to help with the cost of raising children is based on the family's net (taxable) income as well as the number and ages of the children.

In provinces/territories that have implemented an integrated child benefit, the benefit is extended to families on-reserve through the same Canada Revenue Agency process as applies to family's off-reserve. In terms of support of combined child benefits, INAC has in place an agreement with the Yukon Territorial Government to reimburse annually for the cost of the territorial portion of the benefit paid to registered Indian families. In the sections and tables that follow in this report, these funds are identified as the "additional investment envelope".

Reinvestment Component

INAC's NCBR was launched by the Government of Canada collaboratively with First Nations as the on-reserve counterpart to NCBR activities undertaken by the provinces and the Yukon Territory. The government is committed to working with First Nations to combat poverty, improve health, close the gap in life opportunities for children in First Nations communities, and support the preservation of cultural identity. In recent years there has been a stronger emphasis on strengthening the family unit as a whole, with services that facilitate opportunities for parents to raise their children within a stable, nurturing environment, fostering their growth into healthy, active, and contributing members of their communities.

The activity areas between on-reserve and off-reserve NCBR vary; the on-reserve aspects of the NCBR have been designed to offer supports and benefits that are uniquely adjusted to the needs of First Nations. This is consistent with the structure of the broader NCB initiative, which allows the NCBR to be adapted to regional variations in availability of social supports. Activity areas on-reserve were developed in collaboration with and are periodically validated by First Nations, and have been designed to ensure community-based identification of needs and priority setting as well as to allow for culturally appropriate programming. NCBR on-reserve activities have been designed to differ from the off-reserve NCBR to also avoid duplication of services of programs/benefits that are already available on-reserve through other social/health programs. For instance, while the provinces and territories have used the NCBR to provide supplementary health care benefits, on-reserve most residents receive those types of benefits through First Nations Non-Insured Health Benefits.[3] To use the NCBR on-reserve for these health benefits would be direct duplication of an already available support, and would therefore not be an efficient use of government funds.

The following five (5) activity areas operate in First Nations on-reserve under INAC's National Child Benefit Reinvestment:

1. ***Child Care/Day Care*** – to create additional child care spaces and enhance existing day care facilities, so that more families with low-incomes are able to access day care or have their child care costs reduced.

3 | These are federal benefits provided to Registered Indians by Health Canada.

2. ***Child Nutrition*** – to improve the health and well being of children in low income families by providing meal and snack programs to children, and education to parents on family nutrition and meal preparation (e.g., child nutrition classes, food hampers, and meals served at schools, day nurseries, play groups, and parent-child support centres).

3. ***Support to Parents*** – to provide early intervention and support for low income parents/guardians to help their children with a healthy start in life (e.g., parenting skills programs, drop-in centres for parents and children, parent-child support classes, homework/education-related supports, active recreational activities for children).

4. ***Home-to-Work Transition*** – for supports and/or services that reduce barriers to employment (e.g., transportation, uniforms), or provide training to increase the skill level of individuals to increase their chances of obtaining work (e.g., life-skills, direct employment and training classes, summer work programs for youth).

5. ***Cultural Enrichment*** – for projects that teach traditional culture, provide peer and family support groups and bring together elders, children and youth.

For many First Nations, consultation with the community at large is an important first step in identifying service gaps and prioritizing activities before creating any new or expanded supports for low-income families and their children; projects cover a wide range of services according to the needs and preferences decided by the communities themselves. This flexibility is an important aspect of INAC's NCBR, as it permits First Nations to implement projects that not only are targeted at alleviating the effects of child poverty, but also are culturally relevant and responsive to the unique characteristics of each community.

Child Care/Day Care

The main purpose of child care/day care projects is to reduce employment barriers by providing new or additional spaces in child care facilities for children from low-income families whose parents are working or enrolled in training programs. Although the creation of additional spaces is stressed, subsidies may also be issued to help meet the operational costs of existing facilities, thereby reducing the direct costs to parents who are working or in training. When subsidies are approved, they are paid directly to the child-care facility.

Table 1 shows the NCBR expenditures for child care/day care projects.

Table 1: Distribution of NCBR Expenditures for Child Care/Day Care Activities by Region: 2008-2009

Region	Expenditures ($)
Atlantic[1]	9,656.3
Quebec	315,428.5
Ontario	210,200.0
Saskatchewan	567,590.8
Alberta	976,470.0
British Columbia	757,213.6
Yukon	89,679.0
Total	**2,926,238.2**

1 | Figures for the Atlantic Region include Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island only, as New Brunswick does not recover NCBS funds for reinvestment.

Example Project: *Le'lum'uy'lh Day Care Spaces*

The purpose of this British Columbia-based program was to provide childcare supports in order to assist parents to return to work or school. Parents receiving financial assistance to participate in community-run upgrading and social development projects were given highest priority.

In the infant (0-3 years) program, seven (7) babies were identified as having parents who were participating in upgrading and/or social development projects. There were five (5) children in the program for children aged 3-5 years, and one (1) child who participated in the out of school care program. Parents benefited from this NCBR project not only by having daycare for their children – they also had access to strategies for supporting their children's development. The Le'lum'uy'lh daycare also ran a cultural program, which offered access and exposure to the Hul'qumi'num language and culture.

Appendix B of this report highlights additional examples of Child Care/Day Care Child projects funded substantially or exclusively through INAC's National Child Benefit Reinvestment.

Child Nutrition

Activities under this category include projects that aim to support the nutritional health and well-being of children in low-income families. For example, NCBR child nutrition projects may provide meals and snacks in school, deliver food hampers to homes of low-income families, or educate parents about meal preparation and the nutritional needs of their children. The reach of activities within this area also covers funding for summer day camps, food hampers at Christmas, food banks, and community kitchens.

Table 2 sets out NCBR expenditures for child nutrition projects.

Table 2: Distribution of NCBR Expenditures for Child Nutrition Activities by Region: 2008-2009

Region	Expenditures ($)
Atlantic[1]	266,420.8
Quebec	1,140,247.8
Ontario	4,773,500.0
Saskatchewan	4,729,712.2
Alberta	2,468,220.0
British Columbia	2,411,523.8
Yukon	108,122.5
Total	**15,897,747.1**

1 | Figures for the Atlantic Region include Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island only, as New Brunswick does not recover NCBS funds for reinvestment.

Example Project: *Jimmy Sandy Memorial School – Breakfast Program*

The Jimmy Sandy Memorial School, located in the Quebec region, is a part of the community of Kawawachikamach. There are some students who are bussed to the school from the neighbouring community of Schefferville, which is 15 km away, but most students walk to school, even in the winter. The school was built in 1985 after the community of Kawawachikamach came into existence with the signing of the North Eastern Quebec Agreement. Jimmy Sandy Memorial School is a pre-kindergarten to grade five school with approximately 270 students. From pre-kindergarten to grade two the language of instruction is Naskapi. Instruction in the English language begins in grade three and continues through to grade five. Naskapi language instruction is a regular part of the education program from grade three to secondary three.

In 2008-2009, over 250 Naskapis children benefited from the Jimmy Sandy Memorial School's Breakfast Program. $6,799 was provided by INAC's NCBR to offset the cost of the program and provide breakfast to children from grades one to five.

Appendix B of this report sets out additional examples of child nutrition projects funded substantially or exclusively through the National Child Benefit Reinvestment.

Support to Parents

Activities cover projects and programming designed to support and equip low-income parents with skills to ensure their children have a sound start in life. Examples include after-school homework programs, developmental screening projects, drop-in centers, and parental skills training. This activity area puts forward opportunities to assist children in the areas of school readiness and ability to learn as well as supporting greater participation by parents and guardians in their communities.

Table 3 shows the NCBR expenditures for support to parents projects.

Table 3: Distribution of NCBR Expenditures for Support to Parents Activities by Region: 2008-2009

Region	Expenditures ($)
Atlantic[1]	1,588,848.2
Quebec	224,521.3
Ontario	1,962,900.0
Saskatchewan	1,536,456.4
Alberta	2,525,790.0
British Columbia	2,005,405.4
Yukon	86,800.0
Total	**9,930,721.3**

1 | Figures for the Atlantic Region include Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island only, as New Brunswick does not recover NCBS funds for reinvestment.

Example Project: *Tlingit Family Learning Centre*

The Tlingit Family Learning Centre (TFLC) provides child care with a strong cultural component and support to parents. This Alberta-based community project also places a high priority on providing nutritional food.

TFLC programming helps to prepare children for entry into school and addresses any barriers to learning that children may have. The children are taught Tlingit language and provided with nutritional food on a daily basis. In the 2008-2009 fiscal year, parents involved with TFLC were presented with a cookbook of the nutritional foods the children enjoyed during lunch at the TFLC, and they were also invited to join the children and staff for lunches. Many parents came on a regular basis, which was enjoyable for both the children and parents.

Additional examples of the projects that provide support to parents, funded substantially or exclusively through INAC's National Child Benefit Reinvestment, are provided in Appendix B.

Home-to-Work Transition

The focus of activities within this area is on projects that assist families to become or remain attached to the workforce. NCBR funds are used for projects that reduce employment barriers by providing supports such as transportation, uniforms, or other work-related items. Activities also include projects and programming that build skill levels, such as summer student work programs, general job-skills training, access to specific trade and business training, internships, craft workshops, and personal skills development, all of which may improve employment prospects.

Table 4 shows the NCBR expenditures for home-to-work transition projects.

Table 4: Distribution of NCBR Expenditures for Home-to-Work Transition Activities by Region: 2008-2009

Region	Expenditures ($)
Atlantic[1]	597,012.0
Quebec	1,044,911.0
Ontario	790,800.0
Saskatchewan	15,166,471.1
Alberta	2,204,150.0
British Columbia	1,117,214.3
Yukon	86,800.0
Total	21,007,358.4

1 | Figures for the Atlantic Region include Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island only, as New Brunswick does not recover NCBS funds for reinvestment.

Example Project: *White Bear First Nation – Enhancing Lives of Our Members (ELOOM)*

Under the NCBR category of home-to-work transition, White Bear First Nation in Saskatchewan developed a three-year strategy to assist families to develop the necessary skills, abilities, knowledge and confidence to seek employment and/or pursue further education. In order to work towards accomplishing this objective, the first year of the project involved training Life Skills Facilitators from within the First Nation. Upon successful completion of the 6-week 'train-the-trainer' portion of the Enhancing Lives of Our Members (ELOOM) project, the facilitators provided:

- Two (2) Life Skills programming group sessions for members. Each session ran six (6) weeks in duration.
- Modules for adult students.
- Modules for high school students.
- Modules for Income Assistance clients.
- Workshops on Building Healthy Families and Dealing with Wellness.

Total amount of NCBR funding expended on this project was $109,730. Approximately 30 families and 58 children benefited.

Additional examples of home-to-work transition projects funded substantially or exclusively through the NCBR are provided in Appendix B.

Cultural Enrichment

Through participation in cultural activities, a sense of pride in one's heritage helps increase an individual's sense of self-worth and overall well-being.[4] By reconnecting with traditional practices, it has been shown that children's self-esteem improves. Support for cultural enrichment is important because a positive cultural identity helps to promote resiliency in the community and the ability to "bounce back" from adversity.[5] Also, a strong sense of self-worth, healthy self-esteem, and resiliency contribute to longer-term productivity and employability.

With NCBR funding, in 2008-2009 First Nations conducted a wide variety of cultural enrichment projects and programming. Projects with a cultural focal point included summer camps, youth centres, group activities for elders, children, and youth, family and community supports such as life skills, teaching of traditional culture (e.g., language, art, music, and storytelling), celebrations, youth support projects, financial management training, peer support groups, and cultural exchange programs.

Table 5, which follows, shows the NCBR expenditures for cultural enrichment projects.

Table 5: Distribution of NCBR Expenditures ($ 000's) for Cultural Enrichment Activities by Region: 2008-2009

Region	Expenditures ($)
Atlantic[1]	0.0
Quebec	739,361.3
Ontario	2,241,100.0
Saskatchewan	2,848,220.5
Alberta	1,848,460.0
British Columbia	1,530,426.8
Yukon	89,679.0
Total	9,297,247.6

1 | Figures for the Atlantic Region include Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island only, as New Brunswick does not recover NCBS funds for reinvestment.

Example Project: *Oneida Nation of the Thames – Cultural Program*

Oneida Nation of the Thames is located 40 kilometres northeast of London, Ontario. The community is accessible by road year round. It has an on-reserve population of 2,110.

The National Child Benefit Reinvestment budget for Oneida Nation in 2008-2009 was $321,800, which allowed Oneida to offer numerous NCBR projects. One of their more successful projects was the Cultural Activities Program. Oneida's Cultural Activities Program was developed and administered by the Standing Stone Elementary School. The total cost of the project in 2008-2009 was $13,000.

4 | Cultural revitalization plays a significant role in the contemporary lives of Aboriginal families and communities; restorative practices bring people together in the restoration of identity, which also entails a healing aspect that contributes to the overall well-being of Aboriginal persons [Restoule, J.P. (2008). The values carry on: Aboriginal identity formation of the urban-raised generation. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 3(2): 15-33].

5 | Cultural revitalization is beginning to offer hope to Indigenous peoples as it plays a part in developing resilient individuals, families and communities [McKay, S. and Thomas-Prokop, S. (2007). Identity, community, and resilience: The transmission of values project. In I. Brown, F. Chaze, D. Fuchs, J. Lafrance, S. McKay and S. Thomas-Prokop (Eds.), ***Putting a Human Face on Child Welfare: Voices from the Prairies*** (pp. 25-57). Prairie Child Welfare Consortium and Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare].

The purpose of the Cultural Activities Program was to provide cultural activities to the greatest number of children from homes that depend on social assistance. The Oneida NCBR Cultural Activities Program offered many activities for children including traditional teachings (Mother Earth), language, cultural programming, and school trips for cultural experiences. The school excursions included a trip to their Oneida homelands in Oneida, New York, where students were able to experience traditional teachings and interact with their peer groups. These offerings instil a sense of pride of heritage in the children of low-income homes, who often have low self-esteem and self-worth.

All students participated in cultural activities related to language, traditional arts and crafts that were beneficial culturally and personally. Elders and community members provided traditional teachings in the school environment, thereby encouraging youngsters to be strong in their lives. Low-income families benefited from the children sharing their experiences, which contributed to building family cohesion.

According to Gwen Lavalley, Principal of Standing Stone Elementary School, all of the cultural activities provided through the NCBR supported the native studies curriculum by providing enhanced educational experiences. These experiences gave value to culture and related the curriculum to real life. The project was also beneficial for staff, who grew personally and professionally, enabling them to further their teaching approach in the classroom.

Appendix B sets out additional examples of cultural enrichment projects funded substantively or exclusively through the NCBR.

Summary: Total Expenditures by Activity Areas

The amount of reinvestment funds available to individual First Nation communities is calculated regionally and stem from a combination of historical allocations and developments in NCB approaches in the reference province/territory (see Appendix A). Often, the funds accessible to a smaller community may not be large, but the local administering authority may leverage the impact of reinvestment dollars by linking them with finances available from other resources such as day care funding, general band revenue, or funding for job-creation programs. In many cases, funding partnerships have been also been arranged with other community programs serving Aboriginal communities, such as Aboriginal Head Start, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and Training Employment Skills Initiative.

As childcare, social assistance, and other social programs fall within provincial mandates, differences in regional NCBR spending by activity area may reflect to a significant extent the relative availability (or lack of availability) of those services under the reference provincial/territorial regime. Therefore, data on activity area expenditures across regions should not be interpreted as directly comparable; the level of need for particular supports will vary across regions, as influenced by provincial/territorial social programming.

Table 6 below displays NCBR expenditure levels for each activity area by region. Largely due to expenditures in INAC Saskatchewan Region, the home-to-work transition activity area had the highest percentage of NCBR expenditures in 2008-2009, claiming $21,007,358 (36%) of the total national reinvestment. The next most common activity area for reinvestment spending was child nutrition, with expenditures of $15,897,747 (28%), followed by support to parents at $9,930,721 (15%), cultural enrichment at $9,297,248 (16%), and child care/day care at $2,926,238 (4.8%). The percentage figures are captured in figure 1, which follows.

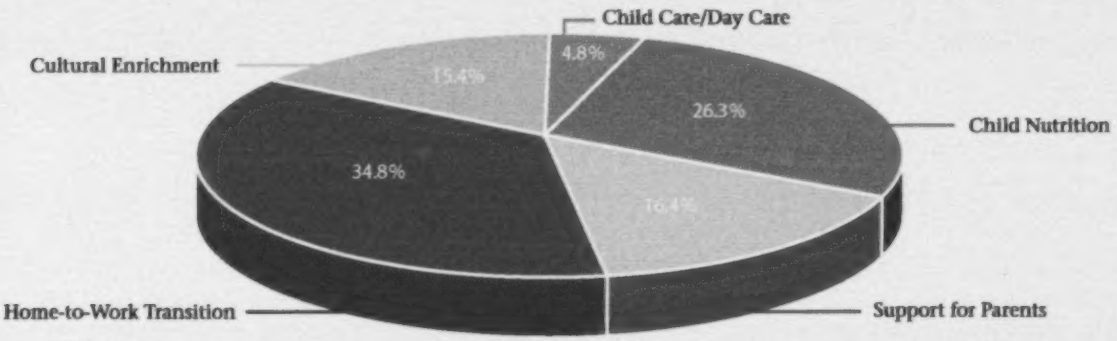
6 | By way of example, there is comparatively little need to use NCBR funds for home-to-work transition in Ontario because First Nations families may choose to access most of these types of services and activities directly through the employment supports component of Ontario's social assistance program known as "Ontario Works".

Table 6: Reinvestment Expenditures ($) by Activity Area and Percentages of Total, by Region: 2008-2009

2008-2009	Child/ Day Care	Child Nutrition	Support to Parents	Home-to-Work Transition	Cultural Enrichment	(Additional Envelope)	Total
Atlantic[1]	9,656	266,420	1,588,848	597,012	0.0		**2,461,936**
	0.4%	*10.8%*	*64.5%*	*24.3%*	*0.0%*		***100%***
Quebec	315,428	1,140,247	224,521	1,044,911	739,361		**3,464,470**
	9.1%	*32.9%*	*6.5%*	*30.2%*	*21.3%*		***100%***
Ontario	210,200	4,773,500	1,962,900	790,800	2,241,100		**9,978,500**
	2.1%	*47.8%*	*19.7%*	*7.9%*	*22.5%*		***100%***
Saskatchewan	567,591	4,729,712	1,536,456	15,166,471	2,848,221		**24,848,451**
	2.3%	*19.0%*	*6.2%*	*61.0%*	*11.5%*		***100%***
Alberta	976,470	2,468,220	2,525,790	2,204,150	1,848,460		**10,023,090**
	9.7%	*24.6%*	*25.2%*	*22.0%*	*18.5%*		***100%***
British Columbia	757,213	2,411,524	2,005,405	1,117,214	1,530,427		**7,821,783**
	9.7%	*30.8%*	*25.6%*	*14.3%*	*19.6%*		***100%***
Yukon	89,679	108,122	86,800	86,800	89,679	1,338,300	**1,799,380**
	5.0%	*6.0%*	*4.8%*	*4.8%*	*5.0%*	*74.4%*	***100%***
Total	2,926,238	15,897,747	9,930,721	21,007,358	9,297,247	1,338,300	60,397,612
	4.8%	*26.3%*	*16.4%*	*34.8%*	*15.4%*	*2.3%*	*100%*

1 | Figures for the Atlantic Region include Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island only, as New Brunswick does not recover NCBS funds for reinvestment.

Figure 1: Percentage of Total NCBR Expenditures by Activity Area, 2008-2009[1]



1 | Does not include funds in the additional envelope.

Accountability and Monitoring

First Nations reinvestment projects must reflect the primary goal of the federal/provincial/territorial NCB partnership, which is to reduce the depth and effects of child poverty. INAC is required to ensure that all relevant accountability requirements are met, particularly in yielding positive results for the funds invested in projects. To this end, INAC conducts regular evaluations of the NCBR.

To support the sound and effective administration of initiatives, the Department developed the *Proposal Development and Reporting Guide* for First Nations NCBR project administrators. The guide provides information on: (1) the steps involved in planning and processing a proposal, including accessing funding, roles and responsibilities of staff, writing the proposal, a proposal checklist, and submitting the proposal; (2) reporting requirements, including time frames for reporting; and (3) background information on the NCB initiative. Included in the guide is a proposal template.[7]

Information on activities and outputs is an important part of the program management process because it provides feedback to the Department about First Nations innovations, challenges, and other aspects of NCBR projects and programming. Formal reporting on outputs and results is required at all levels.[8] Project administrators report on all activities generated by reinvestment funding. Annual reports list project titles, along with short descriptions outlining the purpose, activities, schedule, and resources used for each project during the fiscal year. Descriptions of project outputs and accomplishments for the year, including the number of project beneficiaries, are included. These First Nations reports are used as the basis for a yearly summary report on reinvestment activities from each region to INAC Headquarters. The regional reports, in turn, are used for the Department's input to the annual federal/provincial/territorial report to Ministers Responsible for Social Services.

The annual First Nations National Child Benefit Reinvestment Progress Report is distributed to First Nations, INAC Regional offices, provincial/territorial governments, and the general public to inform the various interested parties about the achievements of INAC and First Nations in using the National Child Benefit Reinvestment mechanism to create and administer services for low-income families and children.

In 2008-2009, First Nations NCBR projects reached significant numbers of families and children in every participating region. However, it has been recognized and acknowledged that the numbers include multiple counting of participants. Although NCBR project coordinators do their best to record accurately the number of children and adults involved in each project, there may be more than one NCBR project in operation in a community at any given time, resulting in the possibility of multiple-counting of children and families benefiting from the NCBR. For example, if the same child participates in three different NCBR projects, they may be counted (and reflected in the data) as three children. INAC Regions and Headquarters have begun to revise the NCBR data collection instrument to help cut down on the extent of multiple-counting of participants.

Table 7: Number of Families and Children Benefiting from NCBR Projects in 2008-2009

Region	# Families	# Children
Atlantic	795	1,600
Quebec	6,046	11,569
Ontario	10,863	18,431
Saskatchewan	53,444	105,906
Alberta	32,969	34,731
British Columbia	20,303	34,592
Yukon	221	385
Total	**124,641**	**207,214**

7 | The guide can be found at http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100035156.

8 | Some exception is given to First Nations that are funded primarily through multi-year block funding arrangements. Under some multi-year agreements, separate reporting on NCBR activities is not required; however, many block-funded First Nations choose to voluntarily report on their NCBR activities.

5 | Observations and Conclusions

Impacts for Families and Children

Fiscal year 2008-2009 has seen significant use of NCBR to address child poverty in First Nations communities. While funding levels have varied over the years (which is expected, given the NCBS reinvestment mechanisms), the number of children and families positively affected by the programs continues to grow.

Table 8 depicts the overall NCBR spending from the beginning in 1999-2000 through to 2008-2009. Since the introduction of the NCBR, there has been a high level of participation in the initiative by First Nations across the country.

Table 8: First Nations NCBR Expenditures ($ 000's), by Region: 1998-1999 to 2008-2009

Region		1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Total
Atlantic[1]		2,100.0	3,000.0	1,548.6	991.4	757.1	3,908.3	2,573.9	2,044.2	2,186.1	2,461.9	**22,571.5**
Quebec		8,539.5	8,539.5	8,539.5	8,160.7	6,202.0	3,314.6	3,134.1	3,044.9	3,360.1	3,464.5	**63,123.6**
Ontario		3,500.0	5,217.5	7,355.3	8,118.1	7,343.8	8,856.0	9,168.3	9,116.8	9,700.5	9,978.5	**81,055.3**
Manitoba[2]		8,400.0	7,785.6	5,322.1	3,209.1	1,763.9	0	0	0	0	0	**30,780.7**
Saskatchewan		8,600.0	11,440.8	15,391.7	16,851.4	18,815.5	19,763.2	22,709.6	21,180.1	24,015.0	24,848.5	**188,015.3**
Alberta		7,000.0	9,667.2	8,566.1	9,756.7	10,173.9	9,422.7	10,079.8	9,283.4	9,562.5	10,023.1	**95,235.4**
British Columbia		3,470.0	4,324.0	4,174.1	5,972.9	6,268.5	6,918.8	6,603.6	6,490.6	7,214.5	7,821.8	**61,558.8**
Yukon		300.0	264.1	341.1	488.5	438.5	564.5	344.9	720.0	447.1	1,799.4	**5,908.1**
Subtotal		41,909.5	50,238.7	51,238.5	53,548.8	51,763.2	52,748.1	54,614.7	51,880.0	56,485.8	59,059.3	546,910.8
Additional Investment Envelope[3]	YK	240.0	240.0	240.0	240.0	240.0	240.0	240.0	702.3	0	1,338.3	**3,960.6**
	SK	8,100.0	3,799.2	5,522.9	2,198.8	1,173.8	2,139.0	3,193.7	0	0	0	**33,367.4**
Total NCBR		50,249.5	54,277.9	57,001.4	55,987.6	53,177	55,127.1	58,048.4	52,660.0	57,188.1	60,397.6	584,238.8

1 | New Brunswick is not included as this province/region does not recover any part of the NCBS (full NCBS flows directly through to families), funding under NCBR is therefore unavailable.

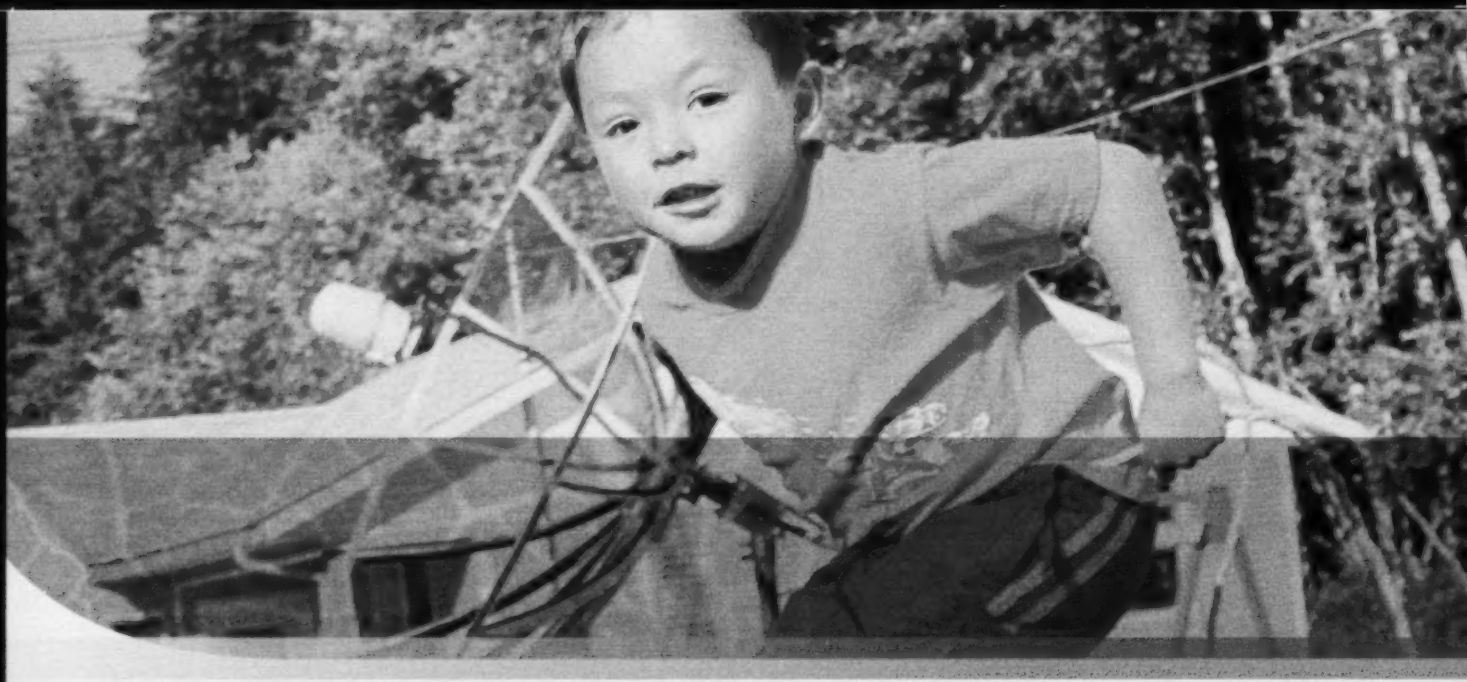
2 | In the Province of Manitoba, since January 2004, reinvestment funds are not available as children's benefits are paid directly to families.

3 | INAC provides funds to reimburse the on-reserve costs of the provincial/territorial portion of integrated child benefits.

The percentage of expenditures and types of activities offered in First Nation communities since 2000-2001 is considerably varied. This variation is seen not only in the amounts by region, but also, as table 9 demonstrates, by levels of expenditure with respect to the types of activities. In 2008-2009, Home-to-Work Transition and Child Nutrition activity areas reported the highest expenditures, which has been the case since 2005-2006. Prior to that, projects promoting Cultural Enrichment appeared to be the focus of NCBR project activity.

Table 9: NCBR Expenditures for the Years 2000-2001 to 2008-2009 ($ 000's), by Activity Area

Activity Area	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Child/ Day Care	617.0	813.7	984.2	865.8	2,323.4	3,246.3	3,260.8	3,561.0	2,926.2
Child Nutrition	5,002.7	6,971.8	7,053.3	5,111.3	12,459.1	12,761.8	13,859.6	14,825.6	15,897.7
Support to Parents	3,463.2	1,288.9	947.3	1,750.0	4,994.8	12,584.2	7,616.6	8,945.7	9,930.7
Home-to-Work Transition	5,078.5	5,738.5	7,900.2	8,886.0	17,508.7	17,102.6	19,936.8	21,498.7	21,007.4
Cultural Enrichment	8,821.5	19,219.4	18,971.5	12,491.3	15,462.1	8,919.3	7,206.2	7,654.8	9,297.3
Subtotal	22,982.9	34,032.3	35,856.5	29,104.4	52,748.1	54,614.2	51,880.0	56,485.8	59,059.2
Additional Envelope	4,039.2	5,762.9	2,438.8	1,413.8	2,379.0	3,433.7	780.0	702.3	1,338.3
Total	27,022.1	39,795.2	38,295.3	30,518.2	55,127.1	58,047.9	52,660.0	57,188.1	60,397.6



Benefits of the Initiative for First Nations

Since the commencement of the First Nations National Child Benefit Reinvestment numerous benefits have been generated, both directly and indirectly, to the children and families of the participating First Nation communities:

- The flexibility of NCBR has allowed First Nations to identify their own needs and priorities in addressing social, health, and economic problems.

- The funding has enabled First Nations to redirect resources into services that improve the conditions of life for low-income parents and their children, making it possible for them to participate more fully in social, economic, and cultural activities of the community.

- The management of NCBR-funded projects has benefited First Nations governments and agencies by promoting and developing community initiatives and decision-making. Local officials and administrators have developed knowledge and abilities that are transferable to other tasks and undertakings, for the betterment of their communities.

- Cultural enrichment activities, such as raising awareness of community social, economic, and cultural traditions and values, has fostered a sense of cultural pride and individual self-esteem, which can result in increased levels of employability.

- The exemplary projects identified showcase community efforts that bring parents and children together, which in the short, intermediate and long term, assists in the strengthening of families and communities bonds while providing mentorship opportunities and cultural continuity between family generations.

First Nations and the Government of Canada continue to work together to achieve the shared goal of improving the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples. The benefits gained by First Nations children in low-income families across the country through the NCBR are a significant outcome as a result of this common effort.

6 | Appendix A: Provincial/Territorial and First Nation Reinvestment Models

As part of the design of the National Child Benefit (NCB) initiative, the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) was introduced so that provinces/territories (and accordingly, First Nations) could reduce their social assistance payments to families by an amount up to the full amount of the NCBS without negatively affecting families' overall level of income; while at the same time, producing social assistance savings at the provincial/territorial and First Nation level. According to the terms of the NCB Governance and Accountability Framework, jurisdictions that chose to "recover the NCBS" were required to put the resulting savings toward National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR) programming. Alternately, the province/territory could choose to allow the full amount of NCBS to flow through to families, but those jurisdictions that chose not to recover the NCBS would, as a result, not have funds available for NCBR.

Provinces and territories have been able to implement NCBS recovery through one of three mechanisms. For First Nations programming, INAC Regional offices (which fall within the same geographic boundaries as provinces/territories) follow the recovery mechanism of the reference province/territory.[9]

The details of each of the reinvestment models (i.e., three methods of NCBS recovery, and the no-recovery model) are provided below:

1. Social Assistance Offset

Under this approach, child-related benefits remain within income assistance, but the province/territory (and accordingly, First Nations) either deducts the NCBS as unearned income, or they reduce their income assistance rates by an amount up to the full amount of the NCBS. In the case of an unearned income deduction, welfare recipients see a direct deduction on their social assistance cheque, for an amount up to the full amount of their monthly NCBS payment. This approach is used in Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. In the case of rate reduction, welfare recipients do not see any direct deduction from their social assistance cheque. Instead, their monthly social assistance entitlement has already been reduced by an amount up to the full NCBS payment. Alberta uses this approach.

2. Integrated Child Benefit Offset (with adjustment)

The provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan use the integrated child benefit offset (with adjustment) approach.

Under this approach, the welfare program has been restructured to remove child-related "basic needs" benefits from social assistance. At the time of restructure, out of the savings realized by the reduced social assistance benefits rates the province/territory puts an amount up to the full amount of the NCBS

9 | INAC Quebec Region is the exception. Because the province of Quebec calculates funding allocations for services for children in low-income families outside of any NCB mechanism, INAC Quebec Region bases the First Nations NCBR funding amount on historical allocations, with the aim of providing sufficient funding for provincially comparable standards of service.

into NCBR programming, and provides the remainder of the savings to Canada Revenue Agency to pay out to families as the provincial/territorial portion of an integrated child benefit.[10]

Under this model, provincial/territorial contributions to the integrated child benefit are offset by increases to the federal NCBS. The additional provincial/territorial savings due to the offset may be reinvested into NCBR programming (i.e., when the NCBS increases, funds available for NCBR increase accordingly), or the province/territory may have chosen to "freeze" the amount for reinvestment available at the time of restructure.

3. Integrated Child Benefit Offset (without adjustment)

The provinces of Newfoundland/Labrador and Nova Scotia use the integrated child benefit offset (without adjustment) approach, and while Quebec does not participate in the NCB it has adopted a similar approach in its own regime of benefits for children.

Under this approach, the welfare program has been restructured to remove child-related "basic needs" benefits from social assistance. Out of the savings realized by the reduced social assistance benefits rates the province/territory puts an amount up to the full amount of the NCBS into NCBR programming, and provides the remainder of the savings to Canada Revenue Agency to pay out to families as the provincial/territorial portion of an integrated child benefit.

With this method, provincial/territorial contributions to the integrated child benefit are not offset by increases to the federal NCBS (i.e., when the NCBS increases, funds available for NCBR do *not* increase accordingly).

4. No Reinvestment

Some provinces/territories have chosen not to recover the NCBS payments through their social assistance programs, nor through offsets to any applicable provincial/territorial child benefit regime. In these provinces/territories, families keep the full amount of their NCBS entitlement. Therefore, there are no funds available for NCBR programming in these regions.

The Province of New Brunswick utilizes this approach, as does the Province of Manitoba.

10 | An integrated child benefit consists of a provincial/territorial child benefit, combined with the federal CCTB and NCBS child benefits, paid together in one monthly cheque to eligible families.

7 | Appendix B: Additional First Nations NCBR Success Stories

The following projects showcase additional success stories that were submitted by NCBR project administrators.

Quebec Region

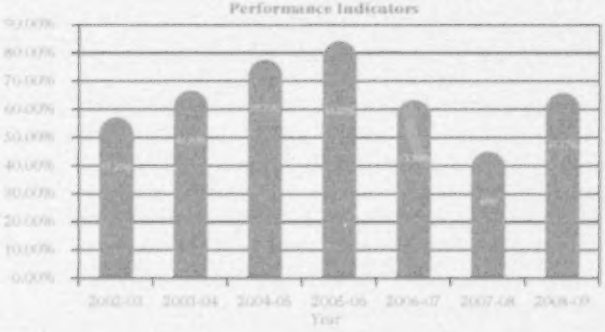
Entreprise d'entraînement d'Opitciwan [Opitciwan Practice Firm] – **Home-to-Work Transition**

This organization offers various work projects to specific clients who are employment-disadvantaged. They may, for example, be under-educated and/or have little work experience. Unlike a job-finding firm, a practice firm gives job-market access to a greater number of participants at a lower cost. It also provides numerous types of jobs requiring different capacities through several projects, helping participants find a job that meets their specific needs, interests and skills. The goals of the practice firm are essentially to develop clients' generic skills and assist them in linking their interests to a job, enabling them to become self-sufficient in terms of employment. Employability development practitioners work with individuals to achieve their professional objectives on the basis of their profiles. Individuals can work on one of the practice firm's projects or they may also undertake, in an Opitciwan sector or business, a career-exploration or career-choice period, or a work-integration or work-training internship; they may also find long-term employment, go back to school, and so on.

Target clients:

- Young recipients under 25 (unemployed and not in school)
- Women
- People in unstable job situations
- Income assistance recipients

Below is a graph showing the percentage of clients each year who completed their contract, found a job or went back to school. These are people who have left income assistance and will not return in the short term.



Valorisation sociale [social actualization] – **Support for Parents**

The social actualization program of the Lac Simon community has three objectives:

1. Improving parents' knowledge of the care they must provide their children through discussions with resource persons, presentations by significant persons (parents, elders, etc.), and themed workshops on routine, discipline, sleep, the importance of fathers and budgeting.

2. Improving parenting skills through workshops that meet identified needs, radio and newspaper announcements, the distribution of leaflets on

the workshops, promotion with partners such as schools and the youth centre, etc.

3. Promoting stronger father-son relationships through shared traditional activities, teachings, and discussions between teenagers and their parents, using workshops on communication and father-son relationships, and traditional teachings on Anishinabe values.

In all, 88 families and 212 children participated in this program. During the year the community also worked closely with schools and the health centre. In their annual report, the program managers stated that the most notable activities of the year were the talks by successful Aboriginal people (e.g., lawyers and artists) and by parents giving tips for success.

Ontario Region

Wabaseemoong Independent Nations – School Meals Program – **Child Nutrition**

Wabaseemoong Independent Nation is located approximately 95 kilometres northwest of Kenora, Ontario. The community is accessible by road all year. It has an on-reserve population of 899.

The National Child Benefit Reinvestment budget for Wabaseemoong in 2008-2009 was $172,000, funding several programs geared toward families with children. One project that Wabaseemoong is particularly proud of is their in-school hot meal program. This program costs $53,000 to operate.

The Wabaseemoong in-school meal program is successful because they are inclusive of all children in the school and they are resourceful. Wabaseemoong's communal approach ensures that no child is singled-out and everybody eats the same meals together. Community members cook and serve the meals, with funding leveraged through Indian Affair's Social Assistance Transfer Fund (S.A.T.F). S.A.T.F. is a job-training program that employs people who would otherwise be on social assistance.

The rationale behind the in-school meal programs is that this community shares a belief that children who receive proper nutrition during the day perform better in school. Meal programs like Wabaseemoong's is consistent with measures taken by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services' (MCYS) Student Nutrition Program, which operates in many communities across Ontario, as part of the province's poverty reduction strategy. According to the MCYS, the Student Nutrition Program provides healthy snacks and meals to children so they can be ready to learn and get the most out of their school day.

Gloria Paishk, Social Services Administrator discussed a long list of accomplishments that she attributes to Wabaseemoong's in-school meal program. She claims that students seem to take a keen interest in learning when they know that nutritional supplements will be provided daily. By sharing in-school meals, students are participating in their studies from a more level playing field. There is a noticeable effort by students to get to school on time. School officials are noticing happier children. According to school staff, some grade increments can be attributed to the enhanced nutritional supplements being provided. They report a reduction in deviant in-school behaviour and more graduations.

Pikangikum First Nation – Night Light Program – **Support to Parents**

Pikangikum First Nation is located approximately 110 kilometres north of Red Lake, Ontario. It is only accessible by airplane or ice road or barge. Pikangikum has an on-reserve population of 2,273. Pikangikum First Nation has been in the news many times over the years as one of the poorest communities in Ontario facing many hardships.

As a result of high social assistance rates, Pikangikum received $769,620 in National Child Benefit Reinvestment funding in 2008-2009. With this funding they have developed a large number of programs to address some of the problems facing their community. One of their programs that has been a fixture since its inception in 2006-07 is the Night Light teen drop-in centre. The cost to operate the Night Light program is $15,000.

The Night Light Program provides children and teens with a safe place to gather at night. Here, they have a safe place where they can get away from negative influences that they face. The centre is supervised by Colleen Estes, who is a teacher at the Eenchokay Birchstick school. Some of the conversations that youth have had with the volunteer teacher staff have helped thwart them from making potentially harmful decisions.

The Night Light program provides the opportunity for youth to develop their skills or unique talents such as in music, singing, in drama and the arts. It allows elders to come in and speak with the youth about traditional ways, family and culture. It provides an open and friendly atmosphere to talk about events in the community. Counselling is available to discuss issues such as suicide, grief, healthy relationships, sexuality, STD's, parenting etc. Youth are encouraged to take ownership for the project and to learn how to coordinate their activities.

According to Colleen Estes, many youth look forward to coming to Night Light and enjoy a place they can call their own. She indicates that Night Light may be preventing some vandalism and violence. In a community with many youth looking for healthy alternatives, seeds of hope are being planted in young hearts through the teachings and conversations at the Night Light.

Saskatchewan Region

Onion Lake Cree Nation – Building Stronger Communities – **Cultural Enrichment**

Under the category of Cultural Enrichment, Onion Lake Cree Nation has designed a multi-faceted cultural program that aims to ensure that First Nations children receive the best opportunity to fully develop their potential as healthy, productive, contributing members of their community.

This project combines several cultural components:

- First Nations Cadet Program
- Seasonal Community Cultural Camps
- Community Cultural Celebrations
- Weekly Youth Mentoring Projects
- Elders/Youth Forums

Participants in this project were provided with various opportunities to interact with one another with an effort to:

- Instil and learn traditional teachings
- Honour/celebrate 'who we are'
- Promote traditional life-long learning
- Enhance parental involvement with children
- Enhance self-esteem
- Build a sense of purpose, unity and pride
- Strengthen the positive relations amongst the youth
- Create opportunities for interaction with Elders
- Promote positive peer influence

Total amount of NCBR funding expended on this initiative is $55,392. Approximately 1,300 families and 3,000 children benefited from this initiative.

Pelican Lake First Nation – Class 7 Driver Training – **Home-to-Work Transition**

Under the category of Home-to-Work Transition, Pelican Lake First Nation has developed a project for IA clients and low-income families to have the opportunity to gain a class 7 Driver's Licence.

Pelican Lake First Nation is involved in a number of projects that seek to give IA clients and low-income families opportunities to remove obstacles to attaining employment on and off-reserve.

Through this project, 20 individuals had the opportunity to improve their employability by gaining a class 7 Licence. Project costs were minimal and were utilized to cover the mandatory handbook, all necessary instruction as well as the necessary driving hours.

Total amount of NCBR funding expended on this initiative is $13,000. A total of 20 families and 20 children benefited from this project.

Alberta Region

Bigstone Cree Nation – **Home-to-Work Transition**

Bigstone Cree Nation utilized a portion of their NCBR funding to hire a resource coordinator. The resource coordinator's responsibilities were to do case-by-case planning on all Income Assistance clients referring them to the appropriate department for training, treatment, or employment. The resource coordinator worked with different departments and industry to provide the clients with the resources to finding employment, training, and motivation to become more self-sufficient. Due to the implementation of the resource coordinator the First Nation was able to reduce their dependency rate thereby reducing the depth of child poverty on-reserve.

Paul First Nation – **Home-to-Work Transition**

Paul First Nation promotes work force participation among the youth by providing mentors. The support helped the youth meet their goals in career development. Work experience was given to a grade 12 student and another received a bursary from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. In addition, Paul Band implemented a pre-employment readiness project. 20 expected to work clients participated. Training covered career planning, personal development, taxation, criminal record checks and pardon process, and work experience.

Samson Cree Nation – **Support to Parents**

Samson Cree Nation has continued its youth rodeo club and youth camp. They were able to assist youth in making healthy and safe personal choices. In addition, they assisted in giving an understanding through traditional teachings of how everything is inter-related such as Mother Earth, human lives and animals. Finally, the program provided daily nutrition to assist with child poverty.

British Columbia Region

Youth Job Shadow – **Home-to-Work Transition**

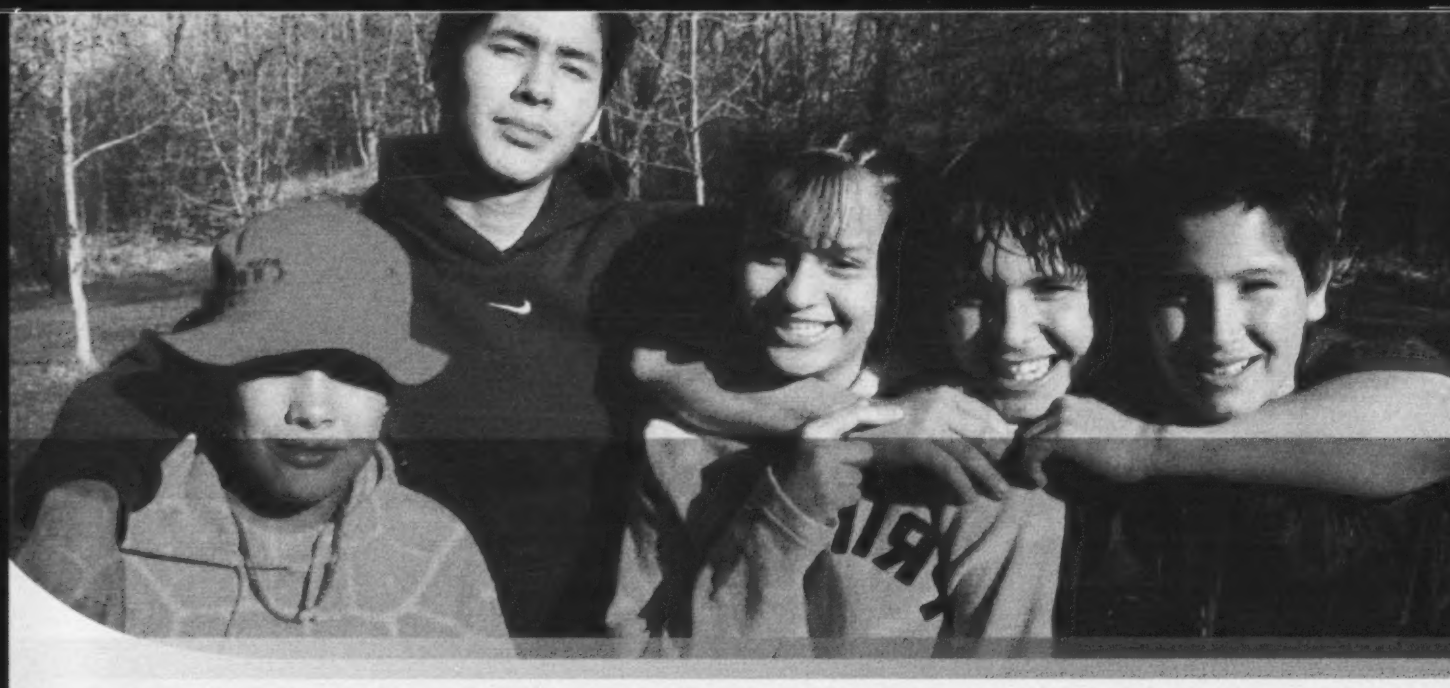
This project gave workers training certificates in first aid, water safety, High Five and Superhost. Workers received training in disclosures, and abuse, diet and nutrition and elder teachings to be familiar with working with children in the day camp setting. The youth were then given hands-on experience at Camp Cowichan. This program helped to build the youth's self-esteem and self-confidence.

The job taught work routines, good work ethics and values, and the basic ingredients to maintain employment based on expectations for job duties. It also provided opportunities to learn about their cultural teachings and traditions in a work place setting where the culture was a valued perspective and guided work practices and procedures.

Clean Up Crew – **Home-to-Work Transition**

This home-to-work transition project provides training for employment and a work place experience opportunity. There are 11 employees hired to participate in the project. Participants received training in the area of equipment use, safety and WHMIS. Each worker was exposed to Cowichan Tribes personnel policy to learn about employee responsibilities and rights. The project supervisor gained experience in personnel and project management.

Over 217 houses on three FN reserves received services from the clean-up crew. This involved garbage pick up, yard waste removal, weed eating, lawn mowing, and general clean up to reduce clutter and safety hazards. Each participant also provided feedback into the importance of yard care and personal responsibility for maintaining the condition and appearance of their own yards. The exposure to the work setting will also help prepare them to be more successful in the work place. Many of the workers are interested in returning to school and have been referred to Cowichan Tribes Education department to explore their options. Workers also expressed that they were interested in developing resumes now that they have more experience in the work place.



YES! Youth Employment and Support –
Support for Parents

This project provides for culturally specific support for parents and peer support. The focus is building and enhancing self-esteem and creating awareness of personal identity, promoting pride in culture and celebrating who they are as a First Nations people.

The YES! Group provides life skills focused on media and film making for youth. One film, "A Better Tomorrow" received an award at the Aboriginal Film Festival. Training and resources are also available which focus on delivering life skills to students not attending classes at school. Besides film, part of the YES! Group project includes life skills for youth with a hands on art theme.

Yukon Region

Ross River Dena Council –
Child Nutrition/Child Care/Support to Parents/Cultural Enrichment

The Ross River School was funded to hold a breakfast program for the community's school age children. As well, Little Rascals Daycare was provided funds for a full meal/lunch/snack program for children aged 2 to 10 years.

Youth were also employed in a spring clean up program. Recreation was also offered through summer camps, and hockey and soccer tournaments.

Daylu Dena Council – **Child Nutrition**

The Daylu Dena Council provides for healthy meals for the community's school and daycare. In an attempt to prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty, the program ensures that children are getting a healthy meal while at school as studies have shown a direct link between learning and eating a balanced diet. Due to poverty, many children are not otherwise provided with a lunch every day. Parent involvement during lunch times was encouraged. The program also provided employment for one community member.